Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology Program
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
Maine Department of Health and Human Services

The Problem in Maine:

- Maine's health disparities, particularly among the maternal and child health population, are primarily correlated with differences in income, education, and the low population densities of our rural areas.

- Many factors have contributed to the maintenance of Maine's low infant mortality rate. Among the factors that will continue to challenge maintaining Maine's low infant mortality rate is the increase in multiple births.

- Maine has seen steady increases in the proportion of pregnant women who receive early and adequate prenatal care. The challenge now is to determine who are those most likely to not receive early and adequate prenatal care.

Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
An Office of the Department of Health and Human Services
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Background:

Epidemiology is the study of the distribution of diseases, health determinants, and disease risk factors in human populations. Maternal and Child Health (MCH) offers health promotional and preventive services through a wide variety of programs. These include Childhood Lead Poisoning, Birth Defects/Genetics, Children with Special Health Needs, the Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC), Intentional and Unintentional Injury, Oral Health, the Pregnancy Risk Assessment and Monitoring System (PRAMS), the Public Health Nursing Program, Teen and Young Adult Health, the Women's Health Initiative, and Maternal and Child Health Nutrition. In 2000, the Division of Family Health, in partnership with the University of Southern Maine and with start-up funding from the Council for State and Territorial Epidemiologists and several federal categorical grants, established two maternal and child health epidemiologist positions at the University that would be housed primarily at the Maine CDC. During the past 5 years 2 additional positions have been added. The epidemiologists work closely with the Maternal and Child Health programs to eliminate risks associated with the various diseases/disorders that the programs are attempting to prevent.

Program Goals:

- To develop and support comprehensive surveillance systems for maternal and child health, as well as for the diseases, conditions, and risk factors our programs are trying to prevent.
- To build epidemiology capacity among the staff of the Bureau of Health's maternal and child health related programs.
- To disseminate MCH surveillance information through reports, web-based systems, and other means.

Program Activities:

- Improve coordination among maternal and child health surveillance systems in order to maximize use of federal and state funds and staffing.
- Support special analyses of maternal and child health and risk factor data to inform policy makers and program managers about geographic and population disparities.
- Develop new sources of MCH surveillance data as needed, such as for child abuse and neglect.
- Provide training and technical assistance to Bureau of Health staff to improve epidemiology and surveillance capacity for maternal and child health.
- Lead or participate in appropriate research to improve the quality of Maine's maternal and child health surveillance data, and to improve understanding of the associated diseases and their risks in Maine.

Funding Sources:

The program is funded through federal funds from a variety of federal categorical grants, federal cooperative agreements and the Council for State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE), and in-kind support from the University of Southern Maine.

Budget: $293,000 – FY07 (83% Federal fund, 17% General fund)

Staff Count: 2 (contracted positions)